

Maharlika

PINOY LIFE IN THE MARIANAS

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Saturday, April 8, 2006

Hosed Down

For 15 minutes yesterday, they stood on forbidden ground. And then they were hosed down.



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Darna Delayed

The delay in the filming of the movie version of Mars Ravello's "Darna" is being caused by "misunderstanding" between parties other than GMA 7.



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ED PROPST

A blend of cultures—superstitions and all

By AGNES E. DONATO
REPORTER

When Ed Propst was young, his mother told him it was bad luck to cut his nails at night. At 35, he thinks it is just a silly Filipino superstition. But he abides by it for two reasons: he is partly (self-confessed) "mama's boy" and also partly Filipino.

Propst, an employee at the Northern Marianas College and a professional photographer, has both American and Filipino blood running in his veins.

His father, who is originally from Illinois, met his mother in the Philippine province of Leyte during his stint with the U.S. Peace Corps. After a three-year courtship, the couple got married and had three children.

Propst, the youngest and the only boy, was born in Samoa and raised on Saipan. He obtained higher education from the University of Hawaii in Manoa.

Despite being a product of so many different cultural influences, Propst maintains that he is as much a Filipino as he is an American.

"I don't speak Tagalog, but I understand Filipino culture—even the superstitions. Some of them are just plain funny, but they are so embedded in my brain that I keep following them," he says in an interview in his soon-to-open photography studio at NMC's As Terlaje campus.

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Ed Propst and his wife, Daisy Pangelinan Manglona.

'Don't rely on OFW money'

ADB cites factors stunting RP growth

By DORIS C. Dumlao
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

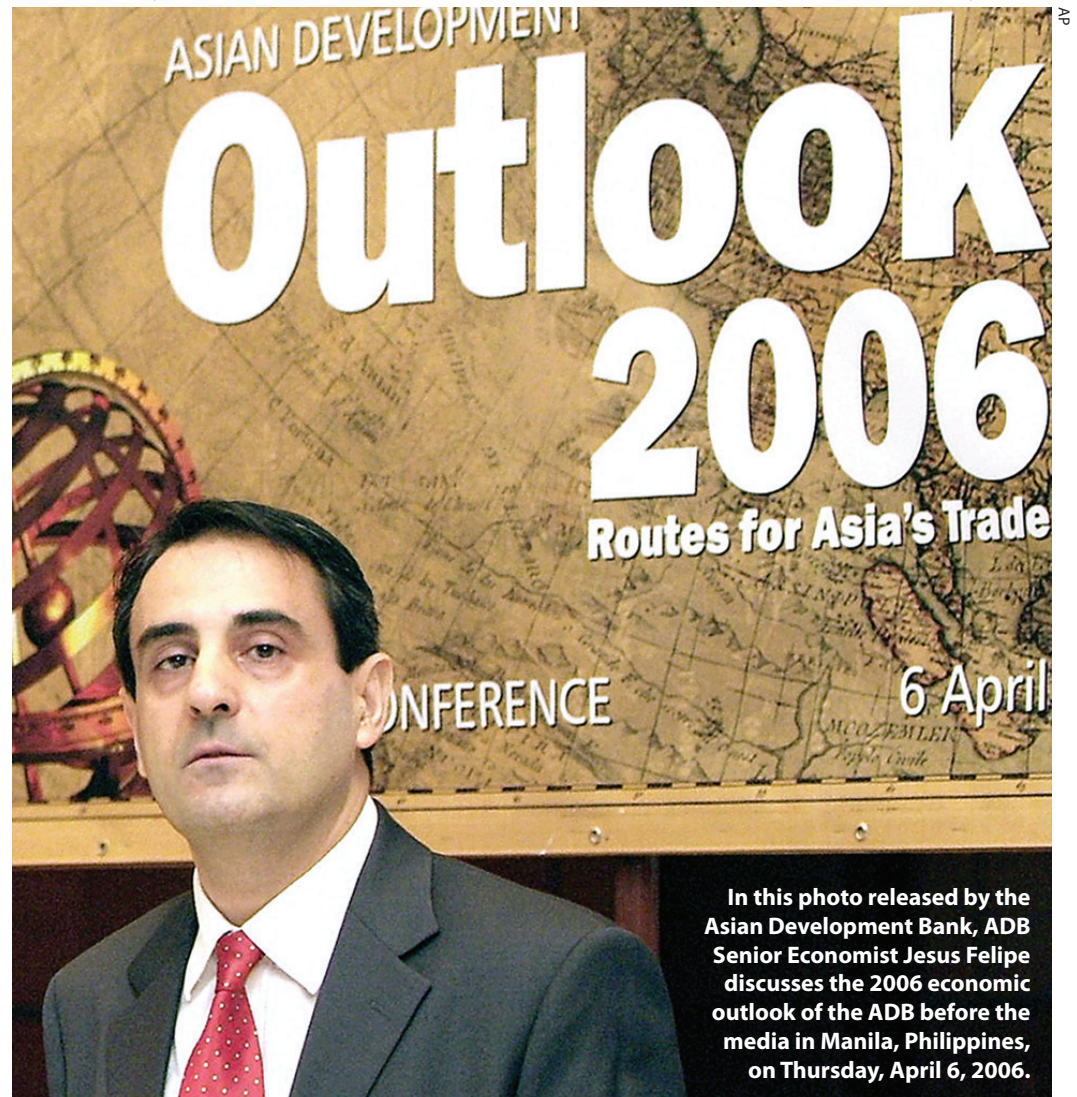
The Asian Development Bank yesterday warned that sluggish investments, along with high dependence on overseas Filipino workers' remittances and consumption, were stunting potentials for higher economic growth in the Philippines.

In its flagship annual economic publication, Asian Development Outlook, the bank projected that the country's gross domestic product would rise by only 5 percent this year against the government's down-scaled growth target of 5.5 to 6.2 percent and the 5.1-percent growth posted in 2005.

Growth for 2007 was forecast by the ADB at 5.3 percent.

"There is no immediate prospect of a significant improvement in the growth outlook. Consumption will remain the main driver from the demand side, with support from remittance,"

DON'T Page 2



In this photo released by the Asian Development Bank, ADB Senior Economist Jesus Felipe discusses the 2006 economic outlook of the ADB before the media in Manila, Philippines, on Thursday, April 6, 2006.

CNMI hits a record of 68 foster parents for Tuloy-Aral Project

By MARCONI CALINDAS
REPORTER

The Overseas Workers Welfare Administration hit a record of 68 CNMI individuals and groups who have come forward for this year's edition of the OWWA Tuloy-Aral Project—the second

time that Filipinos in the CNMI ranked No. 1 worldwide in their support of the project.

Last school year, the Tuloy Aral Project in the CNMI also ranked No. 1 among OWWA offices in the world after it managed to recruit 31 foster parents.

The Tuloy Aral Project is an OWWA project not only in the CNMI but also in other parts of the world where there are OWWA offices. It aims to help children of former overseas Filipino workers and other needy children in the Philippines fulfill their dreams of continuing their

education. With the money, the children will be provided school necessities such as notebooks, pens, pads, bags, and books, among others.

OWWA welfare officer Mary Dait said that the Tan Holdings Employees Volunteers Group comprised the most number of donors for this school year, with 31 members sponsoring less fortunate children in their elementary education. Sixteen other Tan Holdings employees

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PINOYNEWS

UFO donates for Leyte landslide victims

The United Filipino Organization has donated \$500 or about P25,000 for the Leyte landslide recovery efforts.

The donation check was presented to Philippine Consul General Wilfrido Maximo last week, UFO president Rudy Pamintuan said yesterday.

He said the money was raised from the group's recently concluded annual basketball league on Saipan.

"It's a successful basketball league. The donation was voluntary from people who watched the event," said Pamintuan.

He said people paid \$1 each during the playoffs and the

championship last March at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium in Susupe.

"It's a worthwhile cause. The gym overflowed with people; they had to sit on the floor to watch," said Pamintuan.

UFO consists of 26 Filipino organizations in the CNMI. It sponsors a basketball league every year for six years now.

Responsive community

Pamintuan said that based on his experience, Filipinos in the CNMI have always been quick to help when there are emergencies in the Philippines such as

the tragic landslide which buried a whole village in Southern Leyte last February.

The tragedy reportedly left over 1,000 people dead in Guinsaugon, St. Bernard, Southern Leyte. Rescuers had retrieved only 135 bodies.

More than a month after the landslide, monetary donations from overseas continue to pour in, according to the Department of Foreign Affairs.

DFA said that over \$78,000 has been donated by various donors from the U.S.

In Leyte, government officials said that most donations are in kind, particularly housing units

for the survivors and evacuees from other villages classified as geologically hazardous areas.

Other donations are in the form of scholarships for the surviving minors.

The provincial government reportedly said that it received cash donations totaling P5.2 million and \$20,360.

The government said it has been transparent regarding the donations, noting that "all donations were receipted."

Reports said there are about 3,314 evacuees, including 648 from Guinsaugon, who are housed in five evacuation centers in the town.

Bush asked to warn Arroyo vs undermining democracy

By **VERONICA UY**
INQ7.NET

US President George W. Bush should warn Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo that, "by undermining a hard-won democracy, she is making her country far more vulnerable to terrorist pressures," the New York Times said in its April 5 editorial entitled "Dark Days for Philippine Democracy."

Incidentally, the editorial came out on the 59th birthday of Arroyo, a known ally of Bush in the fight against terrorism.

It said that while Arroyo was not a dictator, "at least not yet," she had revived "bad memories of crony corruption, presidential vote-rigging, and intimidation of critical journalists." Advertisement

Noting her recent declaration of a state of emergency in the country, the commentary also warned that without Congress or the courts reigning in "her increasingly authoritarian tendencies, democracy itself may be in danger."

Reacting to the editorial, Ambassador Lauro Baja, Philippines' Permanent Representative to the United Nations, wrote a letter to the editor and defended the President.

In excerpts of his letter made available to media, Baja said the declaration of a state of emergency was made pursuant to **BUSH Page 3**

DON'T

FROM PAGE 1

tances," the ADB said.

"Introduction of the expanded value-added tax helped lift confidence in the outlook at a time of political uncertainty, though the quality of fiscal consolidation will be watched closely," the ADB said. "Investment continues to lag, while the dependence of growth on consumption and on remittance

inflows limits prospects. In the near and medium term, growth of 5 percent is projected."

Inflation was seen to average 6.8 percent this year and 6.5 percent next year, easing from 7.6 percent in 2005.

The ADB lamented that the country's growth performance was falling short of what was required to make "significant inroads into persistent high levels of poverty and unemployment."

It noted that the country's

unemployment rate remained "stubbornly high," although to some degree was eased by the exodus of workers overseas.

"Although generating subsequent remittance income, emigration on this scale comes at a high cost in terms of loss of knowledge and skills, and can have high social costs as well," the ADB said.

Citing a "marginal" scope for fiscal or monetary maneuvering to support demand and

growth, the ADB said there was little prospect of growth accelerating significantly this year and next year.

Immediate prospects for agriculture, which accounted for 19 percent of GDP, were described as "uncertain" on concerns that the La Niña weather phenomenon, which brings torrential rains, could reduce crop production this year. But a modest rebound in agriculture was assumed for 2007.

CNMI

FROM PAGE 1

who are not members of the volunteers group also supported the project by adopting foster children by themselves.

Dait said that, through the \$100 sponsorship, the education of the beneficiaries would be smoother and more rewarding. This year, her office is looking at increasing the number of student recipients to 100.

"We'd like to thank the sponsors for their generosity," said Dait.

The deadline for registration as foster parents ended yesterday, but Dait said her office is still accepting donors who want to sponsor a child in the Philippines. There are no requirements to extend help to the students, said Dait. When an individual has expressed his interest in helping out, the CNMI OWWA office calls the Manila

Office so that it could allot a recipient from the Philippines. The OWWA office will then notify the CNMI office to confirm the sponsorship.

OWWA head administrator Marianito D. Roque earlier said in a letter to prospective sponsors that OWWA launched the project in December 2004 for the schoolchildren to continue their elementary and high school education in the Philippines.

"The education of our youth being a responsibility of Filipinos here and abroad, may I appeal on our sense of social responsibility as we work together in laying down the foundation of our country's future," Roque said, adding that for only \$100, donors could be "foster parents of Tuloy-Aral Kids" for one school year.

For more information on how to extend assistance, donors can visit the OWWA office located at the ground floor of the Nauru Building in Susupe.

A BLEND

FROM PAGE 1

Propst first visited his mother's hometown when he was seven years old. He never had an opportunity to go back until October last year, when he visited the Philippines with his parents.

He describes the trip as more an eye-opener than a sightseeing tour.

"It was a real homecoming. It was great to see my family again. I saw my cousins. I remember playing with them when I was 7. Everybody treated us so kind, like they've known us forever," he relates.

Seeing the huge gap between the rich and poor in Manila was likewise overwhelming, he says. "Wealth became less important. It taught me to appreciate what I have. I felt blessed, having great family and friends."

But the traffic, as well as the

bumpy flight back to Saipan, gave his system the greatest shock, he says in jest.

"Driving in Manila was scary. I think Filipinos are the best drivers in the world. They are one inch away from each other, but they never crash," he says.

"The rain poured really hard on the night we were flying back to Saipan. There was lightning, and thunder, and stormy rain. I don't really like to fly. So during the whole three-hour flight, I made a resolution to just be the best person I could be," he adds.

Propst is the director of the NMC's Office of Student Services and Leadership. He owns Pacific Digital Media, a photography company that will launch its new studio at the Small Business Development Center at the NMC campus.

Propst is married to Daisy Pangelinan Manglona. They have a daughter, Kiana Lei.



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Support Group celebrates success of Fun Day

By **MARCONI CALINDAS**
REPORTER

More than 80 Overseas Filipino Workers and their families gathered at the Pau Pau Beach in San Roque Sunday last week for a day of stress-free fun and games.

Overseas Workers Welfare Administration OFW-Support Group Planning Committee officer Dang Bernabe said the fun

event was held to acknowledge and thank all the volunteers and OFW Support Group officers for the success of the recently concluded OFW Family Fun Day last month.

"The event was just one way of extending our appreciation to all those who helped during the event," said Bernabe, adding that OWWA and the OFW-Support Group are recognizing the Filipinos' hard work and the

volunteerism during the event.

Sunday's fun event also had fun activities such as games for the children, a bingo session, photo sessions, and others. Bernabe said the gathering overflowed with food and drinks because almost all Filipino families brought food as their share for the event.

"We also held an appreciation raffle, our way of thanking the volunteers for their

assistance," said Bernabe.

Philippine Labor Representative Joanne Lourdes Lavilla and OWWA welfare officer Mary Dait were also present during the event.

Bernabe said she was overwhelmed with the turnout, adding that the group made it a point to just have fun during the event and not discuss work-related issues. The OFW-Support Group held a brief meeting,

though, just to assess the Family Fun Day in March.

She said the event made her realize that the Filipinos' bond in the CNMI is still tight and strong despite some factions among Filipino organizations. Bernabe added that the event was successful in bringing them together on a hot and sunny Sunday last week.

Despite the continuous drizzle during the first Family Fun Day, the event drew over a thousand

Filipinos and local guests to the American Memorial Park. Filipinos and a handful of other nationalities curious about the festivity converged for the first-ever fun day organized by the CNMI OWWA Support Group.

Dait earlier expressed gratitude to all the people who attended the event. Dait said she was very thankful for all the Filipino groups that cooperated to make the event a successful one.

LABOR FRONT

Closure of business

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
REPORTER

Q: Does the closure of an employer's business constitute valid grounds to terminate the alien workers' employment contracts?

A: Yes, but the employer must follow proper procedures in doing so. The Department of Labor's administrative hearing office, in the case against the defunct Elephant Corp., clearly explained the procedure. An employer who knows that his or her business is about to close has a duty to give advance written notice of the closure to the Labor director and the employees.

The employer must pay the employees their back wages owed, plus wages for the advance notice period. The notice should state that the employer intends to close his business and terminate his workers' employment as of a certain date in the future.

The amount of prior notice required is specified as a certain number of days, stated in the standard employment contract. The Labor director should review the closure to determine whether to approve it. Once approval is given, the Department of Labor can arrange for repatriation of the affected workers.

If the employer does not follow the proper

procedures by just closing his or her business and departing from the Commonwealth, this would result in sanctions against the employer. The insurance companies, as sureties for the employer, would then end up obligated to pay the wage awards to the abandoned workers.

■ ■ ■

Q: If an alien worker submits a request to Labor for consensual transfer, is that already an official transfer?

A: No. The consensual transfer is considered official only after the Labor director approves the grant of transfer. Labor has also been strict regarding scheduling for consensual transfer customers. If the customers fail to show up on time, Labor would require them to reschedule the interview to the next available date and time.

■ ■ ■

Q: After an alien's working hours, what are the two restrictions that he or she can't do?

A: 1. He or she cannot work for another employer. 2. He or she cannot operate his or her own business.

Submit questions on labor issues to *Saipan Tribune* via e-mail at editor@saipantribune.com, or by calling 235-6397, 235-2440, or 235-8747 and leaving a message at Ext. 133 or 141. You may also submit questions in person by writing it down and dropping it off at the *Saipan Tribune's* office on the second floor of the Century Insurance Building on Beach Road, Garapan.

BUSH

FROM PAGE 2

the Philippine Constitution and was the "swift and decisive action [that] saved democracy in the Philippines."

Baja stressed that the declaration averted a possible violent overthrow of the government by an unholy alliance of leftists and radical elements of the military, which would have thrown the country into chaos and civil war.

"Nevertheless, the Filipinos continue to enjoy basic

human rights and freedoms during the one-week period of emergency, as they do now... The press and civil society continue to be one of the most free and vibrant sectors of our society," he said.

Baja said the editorial, "must have been written through a glass darkly... In no way has President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo 'completely lost touch' with the ideals that inspired the 1986 People Power movement."

He also called on the paper "to look dispassionately" at the

economic, social, and political programs that Arroyo had been pursuing for the people, saying she continues to be a "professional economist" and an "earnest reformer."

Baja listed positive indicators as a result of her reforms: a stronger Philippine currency, a rising growth rate, and the "best" performance of Philippine stocks in the region.

Together with India, the Philippines is leading in software design development, business process outsourcing, and call centers, Baja said.

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Cops hose down anti-Chacha protesters

By MARGAUX C. ORTIZ, DJ YAP
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

For 15 minutes yesterday, they stood on forbidden ground. And then they were hosed down.

Months after the administration's calibrated preemptive response (CPR) policy barred demonstrators from setting foot on historic Chino Roces (formerly Mendiola) Bridge, more than 1,000 activists protesting Charter change and demanding President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's resignation triumphantly claimed the area.

Organizers said it was so far the biggest protest action against Charter change this year.

And Renato Reyes, secretary general of Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan), said: "This is the first time we reached Mendiola since the CPR policy [began to be] implemented last year. "That in itself is a victory."

But the activists had to play cat-and-mouse with police to be able to enter the city of Manila.

Because they were blocked at the Mabuhay (formerly Welcome) Rotunda, the boundary between Manila and Quezon City, the activists decided to break up into small groups and pass through the inner streets of Sampaloc district in Manila.

They reached Mendiola at around 1:45 p.m. and prepared to start their program.

But antiriot police moved in, using water cannons and truncheons to disperse them.

"We had to do our job," Superintendent Bernardo Diaz of the Manila Police District, one of the ground commanders, told reporters.

He said the protesters had failed to obtain a rally permit from the



Leftist protesters scamper as police break up their rally calling for the ouster of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo Thursday, April 6, 2006 near the presidential palace in Manila, Philippines.

Manila city government.

Organized dispersal

The protesters were pushed toward Recto Avenue and Morayta Street after a brief scuffle with police.

They decided to proceed to España Street in front of the University of Santo Tomas and announced an organized dispersal before 3pm.

"We were able to express our

sentiments against the administration, demand the immediate ouster of Arroyo and raise our fists against the implementation of Charter change," said Kilusang Mayo Uno spokesperson Presto Suyat.

"And we were able to reclaim Mendiola even if only for a few minutes," he said proudly.

Suyat said militant groups were preparing for more anti-Arroyo rallies in the coming weeks.

"We will not stop until she has

vacated Malacañang," he said.

The activists gathered at the Santo Domingo Church in Quezon City at about noon and marched toward Manila.

Waving banners and streamers, they declared vehement opposition to the people's initiative for Charter change, which the President had described as a "train that had left the station."

A huge streamer atop a truck that also served as a stage for the speakers depicted a dilapidated

train, superimposed with an image of Ms Arroyo falling off a cliff.

Organizers estimated the crowd at 3,000, with hundreds more who had come from the provinces of Central Luzon and Southern Tagalog regions.

In attendance were former Vice President Teofisto Guingona Jr. and leaders of Bayan, KMMU, Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, Anakbayan, Gabriela, Bayan Muna and other militant organizations.

2 new species— parrot, mouse— found in Camiguin

Two new species have been found in the Philippines, one of the world's biodiversity hot spots facing environmental degradation and deforestation.

A brightly plumaged parrot and a long-tailed forest mouse unique to the country have been discovered in the vanishing rain forest of Camiguin Island, US-based researchers said yesterday.

Camiguin, a volcanic island in northern Mindanao, is a treasure trove of fauna, and already had endemic species of rodents and frogs before the discovery of the rusty brown mouse and the green hanging parrot, known among locals as "Colasisi."

But Camiguin's wildlife is at risk from deforestation, warned researchers, writing in the April 5 issue "Fieldiana: Zoology," a peer-reviewed, scientific journal about biodiversity research published by the Chicago-based Field Museum of Natural History.

"Knowing that at least 54 species of birds and at least 24 species of mammals live on Camiguin and that some of these animals are found nowhere else on earth, makes us realize how important this island is," said Lawrence Heaney, curator of mammals at the Field Museum and coauthor of several of the reports in the publication.

RP police chief urges stronger law vs terrorists

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—The Philippines' national police chief on Thursday welcomed initial approval of a long-sought anti-terrorism bill but urged lawmakers to strengthen it by allowing longer detention of terror suspects and a possible death penalty.

The House of Representatives on Wednesday approved the bill after pro-life legislators blocked capital punishment as a possible sentence for carrying out deadly terror attacks.

The bill would allow terror suspects to be held without warrant or charge for three days. Police had wanted a month.

"We were expecting a more strict law with longer detention and capital punishment," national police chief Arturo Lomibao told reporters. "But it's better than nothing."

Lomibao asked lawmakers to try to strengthen the bill before it is signed into law, citing past attacks that have caused numerous deaths and the potential for more terrorism.

The legislation, long sought by police and security officials, still faces rough sailing. The Senate, an opposition bastion, has to approve its own version, then work out any differences with the House before the president can sign it.

Opposition lawmakers have rejected the proposed legislation, saying President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo would use it against her opponents. Critics say the bill's definition of terrorism is so broad and vague that it could cover common crimes and legitimate dissent.

Arroyo, one of Washington's closest Asian allies in its global war against terrorism, called the bill "a pre-emptive legal strike intended to limit" terrorists' "space for maneuver and flight."

Clash in south RP kills 2 soldiers

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Army troops clashed with communist rebels in the southern Philippines in violence that killed two soldiers and left at least eight guerrillas dead or critically wounded, an official said Friday.

The troops stumbled on a big rebel camp in Davao city's mountainous Paquibato district on Thursday, triggering a fire-fight that lasted more than two hours and also wounded two other soldiers, said Col. Francisco Simbajon, 4th Infantry

Division spokesman.

Simbajon said villagers saw the New People's Army rebels dragging eight to 10 bodies as they withdrew from the clash site but were not sure if they were dead or critically wounded.

"We did not recover any body, but soldiers saw bloodstains in the place where the rebels were positioned and along the route of the escape," Simbajon said by phone.

He said assorted ammunition, subversive documents and personal belongings of the

guerrillas were retrieved from the camp.

On Wednesday, soldiers from the same division clashed with communist rebels in two southern Philippine towns, killing seven insurgents.

In the eastern province of Camarines Sur, troops also encountered communist rebels Thursday, triggering a 10-minute gunfight. No soldier was killed, but the rebels suffered an undetermined number of casualties, army spokesman Maj. Bartolome Bacarro said.

The guerrillas, who have been waging a Marxist rebellion for 37 years, suspended Norwegian-brokered peace talks with the Philippine government two years ago, mainly to protest Manila's refusal to ask the United States and the European Union to remove them from terrorist blacklists.

Last week, the rebels urged their fighters to step up attacks to seek the downfall of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, accusing her of being a U.S. puppet.

OFWs won P78M labor claims vs Taiwan employers in 2005

Filipino workers in Taiwan were granted some 78 million pesos (50 million Taiwan dollars) worth of claims against their brokers and employers with the assistance of the Manila Economic and Cultural Office (MECO), the country's official representative based in Taipei.

MECO reported in a press statement that the amount represented the workers' unpaid wages, illegal deductions,

tax refunds, excessive fees, savings, and labor insurance benefits in 2005 alone.

MECO Labor Taipei, which is responsible for northern Taiwan, netted the biggest collection last year, helping Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) recover 19.38 million Taiwan dollars (30.42 million pesos) in monetary claims. More than 60,000 of 92,000 Filipinos working in Taiwan are based in the area.

MECO said its offices in Taichung and Kaohsiung helped OFWs recover 13.86 million Taiwan dollars (21.76 million pesos) and 16.30 million Taiwan dollars (25.59 million pesos) in financial claims, respectively.

The data excluded successful cases assisted by the agency but did not involve monetary claims or financial settlements.

"This is just one aspect of the services that we are ex-

tending to our OFWs," said Antonio Basilio, managing director and resident representative of MECO. "Our OFWs are toiling day in and day out to make a decent living, and that sum represented not just their hard-earned wages but (also) the sacrifices that they had made for their families. The least that we could do is to help them get their money back, and to remain vigilant in safeguarding their rights."

PINOYSTYLE

‘Darna’ Kinks in filming revealed

By **MARINEL R. CRUZ**
INQUIRER

The delay in the filming of the movie version of Mars Ravelo's "Darna" is being caused by "misunderstanding" between parties other than GMA 7, according to a Kapuso Network executive.

"We're ready to sign the contract. We're just waiting for the Ravelos and Yonzon to settle their differences," GMA 7 program manager Redgie Magno told Inquirer Entertainment in a phone interview last week.

Magno was referring to the family of the late komiks novelist and Hugo "Buboy" Yonzon III, current license holder of "Darna."

Magno Comics, owned by Yonzon, produced the special golden anniversary edition of "Darna," with his son Zach as editor-in-chief.

In 2005, GMA 7 produced the TV version with Angel Locsin playing the lead role and Alessandra de Rossi as her archenemy, Valentina. The series still holds the record for highest rating in TV history—52.1 percent for its fourth episode, followed by "Encantadia" at 47.2 percent and then "Darna's" premiere telecast at 47.1 percent. The network's contract for the TV serialization expires in June 2006.

No commitments

According to Regina Ravelo-Marasigan, daughter of Mars, the family has not committed "Darna" to any film producer. She added that the Yonzons' contract with her family also expires in June.

"We only have a verbal agreement with GMA 7. We've not signed any contract with them," explained Regina,

adding that three other film producers are currently interested in "Darna."

"If GMA 7 decides not to do the movie version, we plan to give 'Darna' a rest," she added. "This is so we could concentrate on our father's other works. He has over 200 titles. We're currently talking with other networks, too."

Regina refused to comment on the reported disagreement with the Yonzons. But she admitted that the contract pertaining to the serialization of "Darna" was coursed through them.

But an industry source said some Ravelo family members felt Yonzon was a mere "tag-along" and should not be given any part in their (Ravelos') dealings with GMA 7 in relation to the movie version.

Yonzon is director of the Public Affairs Staff of the Department of Agrarian Reform, an editorial cartoonist, and a realist painter, according to an article posted on www.planetphilippines.com.

"None of the Ravelos were present during the making of the tele-series," said a member of the "Darna" TV crew. "But Yonzon was always there. He either approved or vetoed ideas pitched by the writers."

Before a film or production outfit could produce any of Ravelo's creations, they should first agree to a number of conditions stipulated in the contract, according to Regina.

Ravelo is also the creator of Dyesebel, Captain Barbell, Lastikman, as well as drama narratives "Roberta," "Trudis Liit," "Maruja" and "Basahang Ginto." Ravelo also created "Bondying" and "Facifica Falayfay" and wrote "Wanted Perfect Mother."

Style guide

Aside from the required posting of Ravelo's name before the film or show's title, the producer must follow a "style guide," especially for characters like Darna or Captain Barbell.

GMA 7 and the Ravelos formally signed a contract for the serialization of "Captain Barbell" in March. The contract is good for a year and a half, said Regina.

The style guide includes costume and logo designs. The producer must "consult" the Ravelos before making any changes in the design, she added.

As in the cases of TV shows "Darna" and "Captain Barbell," Regina said the contract required that a representative from the Ravelo family be a member of the shows' creative team.

"We want to make sure that at least one of us participates in the brainstorming," she stressed.

Also included in the contract is the provision requiring the producer to submit to the Ravelos a copy of the script or story line for their approval, Regina said.

Another important part of the contract is a "morality clause," which states that actors playing the lead characters should not figure in scandals, controversies or drug issues, or appear in bold films.

"If the project would not add value to the character, we'd rather not do it," Regina explained. "This is why the image of the actor playing the lead must be wholesome. We've turned down a lot of offers in the past because of this."



In 2005, GMA 7 produced the TV version with Angel Locsin playing the lead role and Alessandra de Rossi as her archenemy, Valentina.

John Prats: I'd have given Keanna P.5M

By **NINI VALERA**
INQUIRER

John Prats said he would have given the condominium unit and half of the P1-million prize money to fellow housemate Keanna Reeves had he won the top prize in the reality TV show "Pinoy Big Brother Celebrity Edition."

The reality show, aired on ABS-CBN, ended on Saturday.

Just right

Keanna won with 571,607 text votes, 44.2 percent of the total; John, second placer, 372,198 votes or 28.8 percent.

It was just right that his starlet-friend won, the young actor told Inquirer Entertainment on Monday. "She entered the house for the sake of her two children."

Keanna received about P4 million worth of cash and prizes. Her chosen charity, the women's organization Gabriela, also received P1 million.

John said he already felt like a winner when he entered the PBB house last Feb. 5. "It was just a bonus that I landed in



John Prats described his life inside the PBB house as surreal.

second place," he said. "I joined for the experience, expecting nothing. I was prepared to leave in the second week."

Surreal

John lasted all of the prescribed 58 days. He described his life inside the PBB house as surreal.

"No one but a housemate would understand the feeling of being in there," he said. "It's like living in a different world with only a voice commanding you what to do. Only later, after you've fulfilled all your tasks, that you'll understand how Big Brother was really just preparing you

for the outside world."

"I missed Nancy (Castiglione) in the beginning," John admitted. He and Nancy had been seeing each other a few weeks before he became a housemate.

"We haven't talked," John confided. "I'm scared; I don't understand what's happening. I haven't even used my cell phone. A lot of things could have happened in two months, and I'm afraid to find out. If she's [still] there it would be, wow. If she's not, I wouldn't hurt too much."

Disconnected

He said his best friend, Luis Manzano, thought he wasn't acting normal. "I told him it felt weird talking to him," John said. "He said I was carrying on like a new kid in school. He got that right."

On Sunday morning, he had to show up for a pictorial, for his new movie, "Manay."

"Everybody was congratulating me. I tried to act normal," he said. "[But] still felt disconnected and disoriented. The psychologist said this was to be expected, and that I should not panic."

'Little Big Star' finals today

By **NINI VALERA**
INQUIRER

Six aspiring young stars compete tomorrow night for the "Little Big Star" title even as one of the contestants has emerged as a runaway favorite in the Little division (there's a Big division).

There were more than 24 hopefuls at the start of the elimination round when the talent search premiered on ABS-CBN in September.

The six survivors were paraded on Wednesday before the media and given a taste of what's in store for them when they become legitimate stars.

Makisig Morales, 9, an early stand-out, held his own as Inquirer Entertainment asked several hard questions about his chances for victory.

"I'm not sure I'll win," he admitted candidly in Filipino. "The other contestants are tough."

He named Rhap Salazar, another 9-year-old, as one of his stiffest opponents.

"He could beat me because of his high voice," said Makisig, known for his renditions of Basil Valdez songs.

Then there's Kyle Balili, 6, the youngest among the three finalists in the Little division.

"Most of the judges find him cute," Makisig said.

But most his fans also find Makisig cute.

"I know that," he said. "But they're not the ones judging."

If he wins, Makisig will bring fortune to his family.

His father, Uldarico Morales, had quit his job to watch over Makisig during tapings and guest appearances in other shows.

Cub scout

Recalling other contests he had won, he said his feet in before "Little Big Star," he said. "Sometimes, when I win, I bring home P20,000. If I don't win, P15,000 or P5,000." That way, he added, he helped in the family expenses.

Just a few of Ruffa's favorite things

By **MARINEL R. CRUZ**
INQUIRER

Actress-beauty queen Ruffa Gutierrez returned to her home in Istanbul, Turkey, on Sunday, four days after the turnover of funds from her successful fundraiser to the United Children's Fund (Unicef) and the Philippine National Red Cross.

Ruffa organized "Celebrity Tiange for Leyte" for the survivors of the recent killer mudslide in Southern Leyte. As a result of its success, Ruffa said show biz colleagues are eager for a Part 2.

"I'm seriously considering that," she told Inquirer Entertainment last week during an interview at the Discovery Suites in Mandaluyong. "It's hard work."

For now, it's rest, recreation and reunion with her husband, Turkish businessman Yilmaz Bektas, and their two daughters, Lorin and Venice.

In Istanbul, Ruffa is president of Fashion TV channel. The Bektases acquired the company in March 2005 and relaunched it five months later, in August. Ruffa said, "After having two kids, I told Yilmaz I need to be busy. He suggested different enterprises—a spa, a retail business and olive oil or salsa factory. But I know little about these things."

She told her husband that since she had been working in front of the cameras since she was 13, she knew what viewers liked to see on TV.

"As president of the company, I have to make sure everything is running well," Ruffa explained. "But I don't go to work everyday. We hired a general manager and a full staff. I just give orders via e-mail or phone. That way I can stay home and take care of the kids and still do my thing."

During an earlier visit, Ruffa gave Inquirer Entertainment a peek into her closet, plus tips on how to become a charmer like herself. "Sexiness is not about plunging necklines or really short skirts," she said. "It's about how you carry yourself. You can look sexy without revealing too much."



Actress-beauty queen Ruffa Gutierrez poses for the camera after giving birth to her second daughter, Venicia Loran-Bektas, last Sept. 11, 2005, at the Cedars-Sinai Hospital.

As for her favorite clothes, Ruffa said, "It depends on where I am. In Turkey, I dress more conservatively. In the US, I'm a little freer. Here (in the Philippines), it depends on the occasion."

Yilmaz's opinion is a major factor in her choices. "I know what he likes and doesn't like me to wear ... and I want to please him, first and foremost. He prefers the casual look—he likes me in cargo pants and T-shirts."

Her fashion advice to Filipinas: "Wear whatever makes you feel comfortable. Confidence radiates from within. Filipinas today are

more stylish. Five years ago, everybody just wore loose T-shirts and jeans. Now, everyone's very trendy and girls wear make-up."

Clothes

"I like this white Dolce & Gabbana top that I bought in Istanbul. It's very simple. You can wear it with anything—like casual jeans and even under a tuxedo. I also like this black YSL top. I got this in Paris and I've not worn it yet. I'm saving it for a special occasion."

"I bought this (yellow tie-dyed) top for going to the beach. I like its Bohemian look. I originally planned to wear

this with a bikini but I'm now using it for going out. I just put a nice tank underneath. It's good with jeans or capri. This is really great to wear after giving birth. It covers the unwanted fat."

"This (holds up a slinky gown) is very special because I was wearing it when Yilmaz proposed to me. We were in Miami on New Year's Eve. He bought this for me. It's by Missoni. At the Delano Hotel, he asked me to marry him. Of course I said yes right away (laughs). Yilmaz is my stylist in Istanbul."

"Alberta Ferretti is my favorite designer now. I got one black and one green dress from her collection. I wore the green dress at a fundraiser for kids with leukemia."

"I brought my cargo pants with me—the ones that Yilmaz likes—I had them altered here. I have lost 50 lbs. since giving birth to Venice. I bought this pair in L.A. It's about a year old. I like it because I can wear it with heels or with sneakers, with a T-shirt or a dressy top."

Accessories

"People in Istanbul, where gold is cheap, are really into gold jewelry. I bought my dangling earrings there. They are 24-karat gold. They're very unique. I also bought a necklace to match. If I want to look Turkish, I wear this set."

"When I'm here, I just wear my regular diamonds. People here like it simple. Some of my diamonds were gifts from Yilmaz; some I've had for a long time."

"The cutest accessories I've bought so far are made of wood. I think I bought them in London. Whenever I wear them, my in-laws would tease me. They'd say, 'When our house burns down you'd be the first to go with it.' But I like it. It's fresh; it makes me look young."

Bags

"Yilmaz and I fought over this Gucci python bag. He told me, 'You're helping kill the snakes.' He loves animals. (We had a pet crocodile—in our house—for a couple of years. His name

was Enzo. When we had our second child, Yilmaz donated it to the zoo.) I still use this bag a lot. It never goes out of style. But I keep it out of sight when Yilmaz is around."

"I use this D&G bag whenever I go shopping. You can put everything in it; it's very spacious. And you can use it with any outfit."

"I buy all kinds of bags. My mom [Annabelle Rama] and I share bags. My latest acquisition is an orange-colored YSL. I like it because of its Bohemian look."

Shoes

"I bought my favorite Dior high-heeled shoes in Los Angeles. I love it because of its unique style. I also like how my feet look in them. Even though I'm tall, I'm into sexy high heels, I guess because I've gotten used to wearing them. I don't have a lot of flats. If it's not four-inch of heels, I'd rather wear sneakers—nothing in between."

"I like wearing sneakers with cargo pants, jogging pants or with absolutely anything. Sneakers have to be a half-size bigger. Our feet expand in hot weather, so if you buy shoes in winter, you should buy a bigger one."

"Boots, for me, are the most comfortable. I wish it snowed in the Philippines so I could wear all my boots here. I wear my favorite pair, a YSL, with anything."

Books

"I just finished reading 'The Da Vinci Code' and 'Angels and Demons.' My favorite author nowadays is Dan Brown."

"I also like 'The Purpose-Driven Life' because most of the stuff in it—how I should act and see things—is true. It helps me spiritually."

Perfume

"My favorite perfume now is Creed Spring Flowers. Every time I use this every one says, 'You smell like bagong ligo!'"

"I like the fresh smell of Lanvin Eclat, too. My bottle is almost empty."

Mon David, 'evolving artist'

By **POCHOLO CONCEPCION**
INQUIRER

Whenever Mon David performs, he wins the hearts of his audience. Not many people are aware of it, but he's an accomplished musician whose work throughout the years truly deserves recognition.

When he bested 106 vocalists from 27 countries in the recent London International Jazz Competition, David suddenly became a Goliath in the eyes of the curious.

In this chat conducted while he was en route back home, the 52-year-old "evolving artist" reveals why he enjoys his space and making music—a process invariably transformed into an intimate, fulfilling and spiritual experience.

Have you always been a jazz artist? When and how did you first turn on to jazz, and

why did you pursue it?

The jazz side of my musicality came gradually and rather slowly. In the earlier years of my career, I was immersed in the music scene doing pop classics, OPM (Original Pilipino Music), standards, R&B, etc. While doing all these, I would often surprise myself and my audience with bits of improvisations. I started to enjoy it. And then I discovered the music of Mark Murphy, Bobby McFerrin, John Hendricks, Kurt Elling, Bill Evans and other jazz icons. They made me experience the "pure joy" of creating and performing music in a spontaneous way... of being "in the zone," "in the moment."

Tell us about the many hats you wore in the local music scene. What was the most fulfilling?

I was the Apo Hiking Society's drummer for six years; a vocal coach to some of my colleagues in the industry... I've been an independent record producer (for all my albums—"Salamat sa Mga Alaala," "Soulitude," "Abe Mu Ku," "Life and Times"). I founded the vocal ensemble Fourplay with Butch Dans; was part of the original Ang Fourgettables; was part of

the band Jazz Fiesta with Tots Tolentino, Colby dela Calzada, Joey Quirino, Koyang Avenir, Jay Cayuca, Boyet Pigao and Angelica. The most fulfilling is recording and producing my own music, expressing my own vision in a style and form that best represents them. The other fulfilling aspect is being again, "in the zone" with your favorite musicians.

You used to be known as "the fourth Apo"?

I was their vocal coach and drummer for many years and it produced this certain "chemistry" that resulted in various musical collaborations (record productions/vocal arrangements/live a cappella performances etc.), and evolved into a lasting friendship.

How do you assess the progress of your career in our own country?

It's been a long struggle. I think it's mainly because of the unpopular genre that I picked to focus on. In most cases, making jazz a part of your repertoire is [tantamount to] giving your career the kiss of death, so to speak, especially in a very "pop/commercial" oriented industry. But on the whole I consider this an enriching (not fi-

nancially) and continually evolving career. I'm quite satisfied going on my own pace and enjoying my space.

How did you prepare for the London competition?

I learned about it through Lynn Sherman. Later, I was endorsed by the British Council Philippines through Susan Arcega and Tots Tolentino. I decided I was going to enjoy meeting and bonding with fellow musicians from different parts of the world, learn from them and—this may sound corny—do my best and let God take care of the rest.

The Inquirer front-page story of your London triumph mentioned something about your going into a "trance" during the competition.

It's a common experience (being "in the zone," "in a trance") especially when surrounded by artists you respect, with a high level of musicality in the atmosphere, interacting, giving-taking, allowing the music to flow with you and just letting go. It could be the most intimate, fulfilling, spiritual experience.

Filipino solution needed for Arroyo crisis

In a knee-jerk response to the resignation of Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, a group of five senators launched the other day a nationwide campaign to put pressure on President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to step down, to pave the way for a snap election.

The campaign indicates that Thaksin's exit has created repercussions in the Philippines, a kindred democracy. It has revived the faltering "Gloria-resign" movement. The campaign hopes that Thailand's example can be duplicated to drive the President out of office.

In a demonstration of the Filipino proclivity for ad hoc solutions to difficult problems, the new campaign has all the earmarks of a project that is long on enthusiasm but short on serious consideration of its chances of success.

Five senators of varying political stripes decided to band together to give new impetus to the eight-month agitation to force a snap election. They are Senate President Franklin Drilon, Minority Floor Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and Senators Panfilo Lacson, Jinggoy Estrada and Jammy Madrigal. No group can be more discordant. The only thing they have in common, other than their obsession to oust Ms Arroyo, is that they are senators. This grouping does not define them as a political category for effective political action as a political party. It is a politically heterogeneous group, and this imperfection dooms the campaign to being stillborn.

It is easy to overlook that Thaksin's resignation resulted from a combination of elements peculiar to the Thai political system: (1) the intervention of King Bhumibol Adulyadej; (2) the big boycott vote that frustrated Thaksin's bid to get a fresh mandate through the snap election; (3) people power protests were not the main element that ousted Thaksin; and (4) the ouster actions were staged inside the framework of the constitutional and parliamentary system (in particular, the party system).

Since the intervention of the king has been discussed in previous columns, I proceed to the three other points. People power played a secondary role. The opposition alliance shifted to the boycott strategy (in the arena of parliament) after large demonstrations failed to force Thaksin to step down. In the Philippine crisis, nearly eight months of people power has failed to oust Ms Arroyo.

We may now reduce the two other elements (snap election and boycott) to one essential point, which is that the Thai crisis was resolved in the arena of Thailand's parliamentary, party and electoral system. The Thais resolved the crisis rather relatively quickly, and

without allowing the political standoff to drag indefinitely. Incidentally, the resolution of the stalemate provides an argument for the parliamentary system as an approach to break gridlocks.

The election boycott campaign is allowed by the Thai constitutional system and the snap election is not hindered by too many legal restrictions that exist in the Philippine political system.

Thaksin called the snap election as a tactical move to blunt the people-power protests and to seek a fresh electoral mandate to circumvent accusations of corruption and abuse of power. Thaksin used all the tricks allowed in the parliamentary system.

The opposition also dug deep in the bag of accepted political tricks, using the boycott vote or abstention. The results proved that Thaksin's tactical move had backfired, and that the opposition had turned the tables on him.

In the Philippine crisis, the President used all the available tricks to roll back attempts

to oust her, including crushing an impeachment complaint and distributing patronage to provincial followers and the declaration of a national emergency. The opposition was not remiss in employing all available constitutional and legal methods to oust the President -- including impeachment and Cabinet defections -- after the people power option had failed. In Thailand, the institutional underpinnings of constitutional democracy were played out and worked to resolve a crisis. This was especially true of the party system.

The results of the snap election underline the key role of a functional working party in a parliamentary system. Although Thaksin's Thai Rak Thai party won majorities in parliament and in the popular vote, it can't form a government and elect a prime minister to replace the resigned Thaksin because the big boycott vote in Bangkok and the south nullified these majorities and denied Thaksin the mandate he had sought. Thaksin and the opposition checkmated each other with tools allowed by the constitution and the electoral system.

The opposition's decisive weapon was the boycott of the polls. The election results show that in 38 constituencies out of a total of 500, no candidate got the 20-percent minimum number of votes needed to claim seats in parliament, because of the strong votes for abstention. Under Thai election laws, elections are not completed unless all the 500 parliamentary seats are filled. A new parliament cannot form a government without meeting this requirement.

It cannot be overstated that the configuration of events and elements that led to Thaksin's resignation cannot be duplicated in the Philippines to produce a similar outcome. The Thai resolution highlights the crucial importance of a functional party system in resolving political crises within a constitutional system. This is why the campaign of five senators for a snap election is a futile exercise. They have to do something more creative than applying Thai solutions to Filipino crises.



Analysis

By **AMANDO DORONILA**
INQUIRER

Poison

Historians are always asked if the present is much better than the past. Our lives may be easier in terms of modern conveniences (I wouldn't trade my present life for a cave and "bahag" [g-string] in the pre-colonial Philippines), but somehow people don't seem to change very much.

It was horrifying to hear the news about the high school student who laced his classmate's water jug with poison. This was not a practical joke that backfired. Rather, the student was envious of the classmate who was ahead of him academically so, to even the field, he applied his elementary knowledge of chemistry and poisoned the offending classmate.

Poison has always been part of Philippine history and culture. There are some interesting narratives that have come down to us from Spanish historical sources, and some continue to be made current by folklore and hearsay. Every time I go to the Visayas, for example, some friends advise me to be mindful of what I eat and drink lest I take in poison or a love potion. An aphrodisiac I might try taking, but anything harmful won't be fun at all.

There is a particular kind of "aswang" [a kind of ghoul] in our folklore that kills or maims its victims by poison. In his "Treatment of the Bewitched," Jose Rizal describes this type of aswang. So, while I was going through the list of "crimes" in the index of the 55-volume compilation of documents, I ran my fingers through the following entries in search of something to write about: bodily violence, assault and battery, torture, stabbing, poisoning, murder, assassination, homicide, infanticide, parricide, gambling, smuggling, swindling, forgery, counterfeiting, embezzlement, highway robbery, adultery, concubinage, licentiousness, rape, bigamy, polygamy, sodomy and sins against nature, blasphemy, simony, teaching erroneous doctrines, treason, desertion, extortion, insults, perjury, abduction, etc.

It is significant that the crimes with the most entries were: murder, theft, improper relations and gambling. But I was drawn to poisoning because there was one reference that ran through three pages (often there is just a passing reference to the items you look up in the index). The material here quoted is from the 17th century work, "Sucesos de las islas Filipinas" by Antonio de Morga,

made famous by Rizal's annotations:

"The natives of these islands quite commonly use as venoms and poisons the herbs of that class found throughout the islands. They are so efficacious and deadly that they produce wonderful effects. There is a lizard, commonly found in houses, somewhat dark-green in color, one palm long, and as thick as three fingers, which is called a 'chacon.' [Rizal, in a footnote, identified this as a "tuko," or gecko.] They put this in a joint of bamboo and cover it up. The slaver of this animal during its imprisonment is gathered. It is an exceedingly strong poison, when introduced as above stated, in the food or drink, in however minute quantities.

"There are various herbs known and gathered by the natives for the same use. Some of them are used dry, and others green; some are to be mixed in food, and others inhaled. Some kill simply by touching them with the hands or feet, or by sleeping upon them. The natives are so skillful in making compounds from these substances that they



Looking Back

By **AMBETH OCAMPO**
INQUIRER

as antidotes: "Most certain and efficacious antidotes are certain small flies or insects, of a violet color, found on certain bushes in the islands of Pintados [Visayas]. These are shut up in clean bamboo joint and covered over. There they breed and multiply. Ground rice is put in with them, and they exist thereon. Every week they are visited [Rizal actually changes the word "visit" in his edition and says they are shook around or irritated] and the old rice removed and new rice put in, and they are kept alive by this means. If six of these insects are taken in a spoonful of wine or water—for they emit no bad odor, and taste like cress—they produce a wonderful effect. Even when people go to banquets or dinners where, if there is any suspicion, they are wont to take

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Let the soldiers speak out, instead of firing their guns

Amando Doronila is not usually dull in his analysis. But his assertion that the military is increasingly flexing its muscle in the country's political life is simply way off the mark. (Inquirer, 3/24/06)

I am not a big fan of the military, but Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga's statement about the "propensity" of certain media sectors to mythicize putschists is based on facts.

Gringo Honasan and his cohorts were once portrayed as "darlings of the media" and even depicted as poster boys of the post-Ferdinand Marcos regime. The same was true in the case of the Magdalo military mutineers. I remember a broadcaster covering their Oakwood uprising, commenting on how "pogi" Trillanes was on TV. The appeal of young, "cute" soldiers spewing convoluted pseudo-political rhetoric is simply too irresistible for a media system always competing for readership, viewership and profit.

I cannot accept Doronila's irresponsible, nauseating claim that "the media only discover messiahs." To say that journalists and media practitioners are only passive reporters of facts and thoroughly politically translucent without bias, is misleading. The media have the power to shape public opinion and encourage certain political action.

The fact that they earn their livelihood with their pen proves all the more that media people have a stake in the way their craft is practiced. Perhaps, the more accurate statement should be that the media have always set themselves apart, portraying themselves as messianic figures in the country's democratic project. But that is for Doronila and his colleagues to decide.

In the end, it is just unfair to say that because "nearly one dozen coup attempts since 1986 were staged by his cohorts in the officer corps," Senga is guilty of the same offense. That is simply wrong. That is guilt by association, and unfair.

The best way to critique the position of the AFP in these extraordinarily trying times is to allow them to voice their views and, subsequently, comment on them, based on facts and sound rational reasoning. For genuine democracy truly flourishes when there is a robust exchange in the marketplace of ideas.

Instead of being stereotyped as dumb automatons, the AFP brass should be encouraged to have their take at the agora of public opinion and see for themselves that the majesty of the state is made evident not when our soldiers start shooting at each other, but when ideas clash in an open, transparent forum to be decided on the merits of facts and sound, rational reasoning and common sense.

Jack Antero Villa
via e-mail

with them these insects, in order to preserve and assure themselves from any danger of poison or venom."

The above sounds like a segment in "Fear Factor," and just reading the text makes me want to throw up. In this case, the cure seems far worse than the poison.

Naturally, all this appears to be old hat, but if you visit a traditional Chinese drugstore, you will see a lot of herbs, bugs and animal parts in little drawers. It may all seem disgusting, but it is backed up by thousands of years of experience.

I don't think anyone would want to poison me, but those who think there is a threat—real or imagined—could get a pillbox filled with these flies. Or as I read in one of the works of the late Renato "Katoks" D. Tayag, someone in Angeles City in Pampanga province used to swear by a spoonful of fried lice freshly harvested from some young girl's hair. I guess we can paraphrase the old saying, "What is medicine to one is poison to another."

Tales like these make Lenten fast and abstinence so much easier.

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu.

SAMU'T SARI

Team MOVER spirit dominates

This time, it's the Team MOVERS turn on the Samu't Sari pages of *Maharlika*, showcasing their unity and camaraderie during the March 19 Family Fun Day held at the American Memorial Park. Whether it was in performing cultural dances, to beating other groups in the Longest Line contest, the team members managed to convey their oneness of spirit and purpose. That team spirit won the group the first runner-up awards during the Family Fun Day.



Team MOVER gets the first runner-up honors in the Mini Olympics during the OWWA/OFW Family Fun Day held on March 19 at the American Memorial Park.



Members of the Team MOVER show off their silver medals, which they won after garnering the first runner-up honors during the OWWA/OFW Family Fun Day held on March 19 at the American Memorial Park.



Members of Team MOVER scramble to outdo the competition in the Longest Line contest during the first Family Fun Day held on March 19 at the American Memorial Park.



Team MOVER members do all it takes to win the Longest Line competition, even using their necklaces and themselves just to extend the line.



Folk dancers of Team MOVER show off their terpsichorean skills during the first Family Fun Day held on March 19 at the American Memorial Park.



DONATION FOR LEYTE

Overseas Workers Welfare Administration OFW-Support Group Planning Committee officer Dang Bernabe hands over to Philippine Consul General Wilfredo DL. Maximo last week the accumulated donation for the victims of the Southern Leyte, Philippines mudslide tragedy. The group collected over \$3,000 during the fund drive.



BIRTHDAY GIRL

Birthday greetings go out to Noelle Lingcaso, who is celebrating her birthday today, April 8. Much love and best wishes go out to you on this special day, from your brothers Daniel and Ezekiel and the rest of the family.



BIRTHDAY BOY

Happy birthday greetings go out to Vladimer del Rosario, who is celebrating his 11th birthday today. Greetings come from your loving family.